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The spirit of the old New England writers is in this book, modernized and individualized. The narrative has a pleasant flavor of Washington Irving, without being in the least imitative or old-fashioned.

DEATH AND ITS MYSTERY: AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH. By Camille Flammarion. New York: The Century Company.

M. Flammarion is bent upon treating the subject of super-normal phenomena systematically and on thus demonstrating survival of bodily death beyond cavil. In a previous volume he has written of manifestations before death. The present book is to be followed by one relating to communications of departed spirits.

The author's method, though a little unusual, seems logically justifiable. Once establish the fact of telepathy between living persons, and between those living and those at the point of death, and the way is open for belief in communications from the dead to the living—always provided, of course, that we can in these latter cases exclude the possibility of influence from living persons. Now since, in view of the mass of accumulated evidence, it would seem mere prejudice to declare telepathy impossible, why may we not, upon the publication of M. Flammarion's next work, swallow the whole spiritualistic dose?

In the first place, while Flammarion's collection of cases is as large and quite as interesting as any that may be found in the works of any other writer, there is in them, as in all such compilations, a terrible monotony, a deadening unsatisfactoriness. This kind of unsure and unperfect revelation is not to one's taste; it does little more than harrow one's feelings.

In the second place, we have to consider the possible results of such investigations. It is altogether too easy to assume that they can have but one result. Surely one can sympathize fully with those patient investigators who, like M. Flammarion, have submitted to obloquy in the exploration of what they deem a pathway to truth and whose efforts are continually hampered by prejudice and by a somewhat cowardly disposition to conceal facts. But supposing all these researches should end simply in relegating all spiritualistic phenomena to the domain of morbid psychology, in establishing a new branch of psychology, perhaps, or even a new branch of physics, but without discovering anything in the least satisfying to our higher nature? There are signs that this result is by no means impossible. Those who enter upon these investigations from the standpoint of the physical sciences come out with scientific or pseudo-scientific results, while those who go into them in a religious frame of mind come out with the faith wherewith they went in. Meanwhile moth and rust do not cease to corrupt nor thieves to break through and steal. Except in exceptional cases, where there is constant "communication" through mediums, the bereaved do not seem happier than before, and in these latter cases the effect upon character seems questionable. Spirit messages amount to nothing. If the whole mass of alleged phenomena should be reduced to

coldly scientific facts, a period of pronounced unfaith would almost certainly ensue. This does not deny the chance that the spiritualists may ultimately arrive, but in the meantime what of those who have pinned their faith to occultism?

The truth seems to be that the study of the occult is a science in its crude and early stages. Its professors should be unmolested, but those who are in haste to popularize what they believe themselves to have learned are not doing so great a service to humanity as they imagine. The reader attracted by this kind of reading may generally be assured that if he has examined a comprehensive work like Henry Holt's *Cosmic Relations* he will find little to satisfy his further curiosity in other works upon the supernatural.

MEMOIRS OF A CLUBMAN. By G. B. Burgin. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company.

The title of Mr. Burgin's book hardly does it justice, since for some reason or other it suggests a rather superficial view of the world. But active as the author has been in club life, his autobiography is really the story of an author's career. The two best qualities of the narrative are its humor and its ill-concealed spirit of helpfulness. Mr. Burgin, according to his own account, "drifted into writing", a profession which he (like many another man) has found to be both a source of interest and a questionable blessing. To read a little between the lines, Mr. Burgin, though he has been highly successful, has not the consolation of feeling that he is great. But many a young man will, in the course of human events, "drift into writing", and still more, both old and young have leanings that way. Of these few or none can aspire to greatness.

Born in Croydon, England, in 1856, Mr. Burgin early fell victim to the sentiment that leads young fellows to write. A dwarf, Jerry Oletenshaw, who was his boon companion in his 'teens, confirmed him in his literary bent. "Jerry consorted a great deal with the Gypsies on the Common, and, in some mysterious way born of suffering, had acquired an insight into the future. 'You will travel,' he said. 'You will travel into strange lands and meet with many things. Store them in your heart and write books.' At that time," Burgin adds, "it seemed to me the summit of human felicity to be able to write books. Sometimes the gods answer our prayers in order to punish us for having made them."

When eighteen, the author won a copy of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* "in an alleged literary competition." His father, perceiving that the literary life had laid fast hold upon him, sent him out to Canada, in order that he might at least have something to write about before he attempted to write. This Canadian episode is an idyl, curiously real, remarkably affecting in its contrast with the atmosphere of the great world which pervades all other parts of the book. Mr. Burgin says just enough about his honest friends at Four Corners and his lost love, Sheila Campbell, to leave an unforgettable impression.